Volume 1.
Number 13.

Week of
November 18, 1940

Critics'

THEATRE REVIEWS

INDEX

Stage Play	Pages
Another Sun	382, 383, 384
At the Stroke of Eight	305, 306
*Beverly Hills	226, 227, 228
Billy Draws a Horse	436, 437, 438
*Blind Alley	252, 253, 254
Boyd's Daughter	256, 257, 258
*Boys and Girls Together	266, 267, 268
Burning Deck (The)	376, 377, 378
*Cabin in the Sky	242, 243, 244
Case of Youth (A)	357, 358
*Charley's Aunt	249, 250, 251
Christmas Eve	427, 428, 429
*Du Barry Was a Lady	439, 440, 441
Earl Carroll's Vanities	418, 419, 420
Farm of Three Echoes	448, 449, 450
Fifth Column (The)	370, 371, 372
Geneva	403, 404, 405
*George Washington Slept Here	246, 247, 248
†*Glamour Preferred	220, 221, 222
Gondoliers (The)	269, 270, 271
Goodbye in the Night	364, 365, 366
Grey Farm	317, 318
Hamlet	442, 443, 444
Heavenly Express	325, 326, 327
*Hellzapoppin	493, 494, 495
Higher and Higher	337, 338, 339
*Hold On to Your Hats	278, 279, 280
International Incident (An)	340, 341, 342
*It Happens on Ice	259, 260, 261
John Henry	421, 422, 423
*Johnny Belinda	274, 275, 276
Journey to Jerusalem	262, 263, 264
Juno and the Paycock	415, 416, 417
Jupiter Laughs	281, 282, 283
Keep off the Grass	302, 303, 304
Key Largo	451, 452, 453
*Kind Lady	286, 287, 288
Kindred	430, 431, 432
King Richard II	343, 344, 345
Ladies and Gentlemen	469, 470, 471
Ladies in Retirement	351, 352, 353
Lady in Waiting	348, 349, 350
Leave Her to Heaven	379, 380, 381
*Life With Father	457, 458, 459
Liliom	354, 355, 356
Little Foxes (The)	490, 491, 492
*Louisiana Purchase	296, 297, 298
Love for Love	293, 294, 295
Love's Old Sweet Song	319, 320, 321
Male Animal (The)	424, 425, 426
*Man Who Came to Dinner (The)	472, 473, 474
Man Who Killed Lincoln (The)	412, 413, 414
Margin for Error	460, 461, 462
Medicine Show	331, 332, 333
Morning Star	328, 329, 330
Morning's at Seven	445, 446, 447
My Dear Children	400, 401, 402
Night Music	385, 386, 387
Out From Under	315, 316
*Panama Hattie	233, 234, 235
Passenger to Bali (A)	367, 368, 369
Philadelphia Story (The)	487, 488, 489
Pins and Needles	496, 497
*Quiet Please	224, 225, 226
Return Engagement	230, 231, 232
Return of the Vagabond (The)	307, 308, 309
Reunion in New York	388, 389, 390
Romeo and Juliet	310, 311, 312
Russian Bank	299, 300, 301
See My Lawyer	478, 479, 480
*Separate Rooms	359, 360
Scene of the Crime (The)	346, 347
Sim Sala Bim	283, 284
Skylark	475, 476, 477
Strangler Fig (The)	313, 314
Streets of Paris (The)	484, 485, 486
Suspect	334, 335, 336
*Suzanna and the Elders	236, 237, 238
Taming of the Shrew (The)	397, 398, 399
Theatre of the Piccoli	361, 362, 363
There Shall Be No Night	322, 323, 324
Time of Your Life (The)	463, 464, 465
'Tis of Thee	240, 241
*Tobacco Road	498, 499, 500
Too Many Girls	466, 467, 468
Two for the Show	394, 395, 396
Two on an Island	409, 410, 411
Unconquered (The)	391, 392, 393
Walk With Music	290, 291, 292
Weak Link (The)	373, 374, 375
When We Are Married	433, 434, 435
World We Make (The)	454, 455, 456
Yokel Boy	481, 482, 483
Young Couple Wanted	406, 407, 408

** Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play during the week of November 18, 1940.*

† "Glamour Preferred" opened last Friday, November 15th, at the Booth Theatre.

THEATRE REVIEWS IS A COMPLETE GUIDE AND RECORD TO THE NEW YORK SHOWS

Critics' Theatre Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York papers

New York Sun	**New York Times**
New York Post	**New York Daily News**
New York Herald Tribune	**New York World-Telegram**

Place this week's reviews with preceding weekly reviews so as to have always an up to date file of the New York Stage.

Published by

CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, 122 East 42nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Yearly Subscription
$15.00

"Glamour Preferred"

Reprinted from NEW YORK TIMES, *November 16, 1940*

Hollywood Is Selected as the Topic of a Satirical Comedy Entitled 'Glamour Preferred'

By BROOKS ATKINSON

OWING to fortunes of booking, we have had three plays about Hollywood in succession. The third and final one in the series, "Glamour Preferred," opened at the Booth last evening. Frankly, it is no improvement. Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements, who are Hollywood writers and also married, have run up this number out of the familiar materials—bedlam and charlatanism, with a hemstitching of domestic infidelity. Since all three of the Hollywood plays have dripped acidly off the pens of screen writers, it begins to look as if they had a prejudice against Hollywood. It will be ironically remembered at this point that George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart had never been to Hollywood when they wrote "Once in a Lifetime," which remains the best of the satires on culture in the home town of the screen.

* * *

If one wanted to be malicious one might suggest that the authors of the recent Hollywood comedies also have a prejudice against the theatre. They write for the theatre as if they were trying to undermine the business. "Glamour Preferred" is a screaming brawl about the love-life of the leading glamour boy. He is a fool. When a scheming little trollop with a title tries to undermine his domestic bliss he topples over in her direction almost at once. It takes a lot of manipulation of characters to push him back into place.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Clements have written their lampoon frantically, as if they were afraid that they might not be able to get everything in before closing time. Antoinette Perry's direction is frantic, too. The actors can hardly get on and off the stage swiftly enough, and they hardly have time enough to speak their lines. It would take a sorcerer's apprentice to define a part in circumstances like that. Louis Sorin succeeds better than any of the others. In a part compounded of Goldwynisms, he has warmth, clarity and style; and in the midst of the whirlwind he describes a character. Flora Campbell and Robert Craven are lucky enough to have a romantic scene that they can play with composure. After the tornado of vulgarisms, two people settle down and quietly speak their minds.

Last evening Miss Campbell and Mr. Craven played this scene beautifully and for a few moments captivated the audience. To one theatregoer it suggested that love is an interesting topic. Some day a playwright with an original and daring mind is going to write a play about love. The town will go mad. It will start a new trend in the theatre.

Reprinted from NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, *November 16, 1940*

Broadway Gets 3rd Hollywood Play

Glamour Preferred Opens at the Booth Theater

By SIDNEY B. WHIPPLE

A THIRD play dealing with the life and customs of Hollywood, was opened at the Booth Theater last night under the title of Glamour Preferred, and the whole business begin to smack of conspiracy, but whether against Hollywood or the playgoers I could not say.

Out of these three plays—Beverly Hills, Quiet Please and Brock Pemberton's offering of last night—a certain stereotyped picture of the movie colony has emerged. Constant repetition has almost convinced us that the ratio of disagreeable people to decent humans out there is approximately 18 to one. The authors of the trilogy seem to be agreed on that.

They also seem to be agreed on many other matters. All male stars are creatures with little boys' minds and the athletic prowess of so many Casanovas. All actresses who find themselves becoming passe resort to boudoir strategy to renew their contracts. All writers are long-haired mice and all columnists are rats. All agents are double-crossers and all producers talk like Sam Goldwyn.

A checkup of the roster of these last three plays reveals that there were, altogether, 58 characters in them. Of these 58, all but five (not counting the servants) were distinctly odious, malicious, greedy, vindictive and, in great part, moronic. The five who were ordinary, decent humans consisted of three wronged, long-suffering and strangely forgiving wives, one scenario writer who was weak-willed but otherwise all right, and a rather jolly sort of Englishman who wandered into Glamour Preferred by mistake.

If these three pictures of Hollywood, differing from each other only by slight shades, had been drawn with cleverly satiric lines, there might be some reason for the plays, despite the poverty of ideas behind them. But, although there were lines in each that drew laughs, these were merely isolated wisecracks, double-entendres and occasional bold references to the busy sex life of the principals.

To repeat the story of Glamour Preferred would be only to rehash the theme of Quiet Please and, in essence at least, that of Beverly Hills. It is the old, old tale of the fatuous male star who is about to fall for the beautiful siren, and who is saved from this cropper by his everloving wife. When I tell you that this idiotic wife explains her love for the man by saying something that sounded suspiciously like, "Well, he's just a boy at heart," you will recognize the quality of writing. When I go further and add that there is the inevitable drunk scene at the curtain, with the head of the purity league getting tight on half a bottle of champagne, I need say no more.

It is not a bad cast—nor a particularly good one—that Mr. Pemberton has put into his production. Betty Lawford is the siren and acts with her customary vixenish spirit and with few more clothes than she wore in the bathtub in The Women. Flora Campbell is the wronged wife, and gives a precise, mannered and mechanized performance. Louis Sorin, as the dialectician producer delivers his Goldwynisms genially, and Robert Craven, as the Englishman, is engaging, perhaps because he is one of the two sympathetic characters in the play.

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Critics'

Theatre Reviews

"Glamour Preferred"

Reprinted from NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, *November 16, 1940*

"Glamour Preferred" Has to Do With the Oomphs of Hollywood

"Glamour Preferred," comedy by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements. Produced by Brock Pemberton at the Booth Theatre, New York, Nov. 15, 1940.

★ ★+

By BURNS MANTLE

FLORENCE RYERSON and Colin Clements, who wrote "Glamour Preferred," shown at the Booth Theatre last night, include an honest Englishman in their story. He doesn't appear until the middle of the second act and then, for a minute and a half, or perhaps two minutes, he talks sense.

This scene took last night's audience so completely by surprise that it broke into something very like delighted applause.

It is so seldom that anything like sense raises its arresting voice in Hollywood scripts, the sense of relief and gratification was immediate.

Hollywood comedies are for the most part confused impressions of a swarm of unpleasant people saying either ugly or trivial things. To have one of them stop the proceedings long enough to say something like:

"Now, listen—this sort of thing, you know, is all wrong. You don't like it. You don't believe in it. You are not happy in it. So why not chuck it?"

In Better Class

Even that bit of obvious reasoning means something. The Englishman, who was trying to shed a wife he calmly described as "a bit of a slut," when he found her trying to break up the marriage of a glamour boy of the screen, was not able to put his point over entirely. But he made a good try and was rightfully rewarded.

"Glamour Preferred" is, judged by recent standards, one of the better exposures of Hollywood family life in what is potentially the scandal set.

Lynn, who was a star, has married Kerry Eldridge, who is a star, and settled down on one of those comic ranch homes, with swimming pool and menagerie attached, in the expectation of making a man of him and a home for herself.

Kerry, on a personal appearance tour in the East, meets Bonita Towyn, with whom he formerly played around, and Bonita, though married to an English title, tries to lure him back. She follows him home to Hollywood, forces the jealousy of his wife and is about to succeed with her plan when certain things happen that materially change the picture.

The Other Half

It is written with a certain sprightliness of dialogue and an honest effort to remain true to Hollywood character. Its people make up the familiar group—the ignorant and explosive producer, the badgered publicity man, the hysterical script writer, the poised secretary, the photogenic leading lady, the glamour star and his diplomatic mate.

Some day some one is going to write a Hollywood comedy entirely about the common but ever so human extras, and that should have values that all the others have so far missed.

Like "Quiet, Please," the Ryerson-Clements comedy is blessed with a competent and attractive leading woman, the same being the Flora Campbell you may recall in "Excursion" and "Many Mansions." Miss Campbell is able to do as well as any of them with trivial scenes and much more able than most of them to play the better scenes when they are given her.

She is flanked on one side by Betty Lawford, one of the more convincing of the sirens, and on the other by Gene Langan, a good looking and competent juvenile lead new to Broadway.

Robert Craven plays the sane Englishman previously referred to, and is of vast help to the proceedings. Others include Louis Sorin, nicely in character as the producer; Irene Corlett, from Rollins College; Maidel Turner, a crusader for the Purity League and, for the record, Elaine Perry, Antoinette Perry's youngest daughter, who makes her professional debut in what might be called a screaming bit. Elaine does the screaming.

A nice set by John Root and direction by Miss Perry.

'GLAMOUR PREFERRED'

A comedy in three acts by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements. Directed by Antoinette Perry. Setting by John Root. Presented at the Booth Theater on November 15, 1940, by Brock Pemberton. The cast:

Amanda Beckett	Helen Harmon
Louella	Elsie Mae Gordon
Webster	Henry Vincent
Angela Vaughn	Irene Corlett
Max Musick	Loring Smith
Lynn Eldridge	Flora Campbell
Two Silver-Fish Exterminators	Charles Rains, Thomas Babcock
Jeff Potter	Lex Lindsay
Kerry Eldridge	Glen Langan
A Strange Girl	Elaine Perry
Bernard C. Goldwater	Louis Sorin
Nicholas Jorga	Stefan Schnabel
Mrs. Florinda Mott Pengilly	Maidel Turner
Lady Bonita Towyn	Betty Lawford
Homer Cox	James O'Rear
Henry	Haskell Coffin
Karl Reinbeck	Henry Levin
Sir Hubert Towyn	Robert Craven
Officer Hanan	James Gregory

Reprinted from NEW YORK POST, *November 16, 1940*

Brock Pemberton Stages "Glamour Preferred"

By JOHN MASON BROWN

FOR the third—and one hopes the last—time, Broadway has gone down this season trying to make Hollywood funnier than it evidently is. "Beverly Hills," "Quiet Please," and now "Glamour Preferred" have all of them in quick succession aimed damp Roman candles at the film colony without shedding any light on an over-exposed subject or adding to the gaiety of local playgoers.

Like its predecessors, the farce by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements, which Brock Pemberton presented at the Booth last night, wastes a great deal of energy delving into the home-life of celluloid celebrities. In the case of "Glamour Preferred" the threatened infidelity of a scrambled foursome is supposed to supply the evening with its laughs. Perhaps it might if, in spite of the debilitating confusion of the writing, it were possible to be interested in (much less, care for) any of the figures whose careers and marriages are shown to be endangered.

Once again New Yorkers are expected to cull out a holiday at the expense of the cinema's rumored morons who are as incapable of humor as they are of sense. This does not mean that no attempt at gaiety is made at the Booth. It is. It most assuredly is. Joke after joke is laboriously lifted from its sarcophagus and spun out of its winding sheet, until the stage is crowded with verbal mummies. But, though a niggardly blood transfusion is given to each and every old wheeze about Hollywood and its mythical inanities, none of these wheezes ends up by seeming much more contemporary than the Ptolemies.

Neither the direction nor the playing last night helped in the process of revivifying the authors' long-dead gags. Flora Campbell was, at best, moderate in a ridiculous part. Robert Craven won some easy laughs as the kind of stage Englishman that grandma thought uproarious. Glen Langan was stiff as a basement-full of pokers as a screen hero. Betty Lawford, cast as a home-breaker, was nervous and downed by the writing, as indeed was everyone else. Only Louis Sorin as Bernard C. Goldwater—a recognizable sketch of one of the west coast's most mythical realities—had any truth or humorous persuasion whatsoever.

If Hollywood objects to such treatment as "Glamour Preferred" represents, so does Broadway, and for more valid reasons. For one thing, it is nearer home. It would be wiser for the theatre just now to stop trying to make stale fun of the movies, and to take stock of its own shortcomings.